

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 00370 190823Z

17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 SAJ-01

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----- 031559

P R 171355Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5701

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 370

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL MISCELLANY: FAR LEFT DEMONSTRATION UNIMPRESSIVE

REF: (A) LISBON 0230 (DTG 121550Z JAN 76), (B) LISBON 0362
(DTG 170838Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: FIRST WEEKEND DEMONSTRATION MOUNTED FROM FAR LEFT
WAS UNIMPRESSIVE. POLICE, ON OTHER HAND WERE UNUSUALLY
WELL PREPARED AND EQUIPPED. CUNHAL'S OPORTO SPEECH TO SMALL
FARMERS CONTINUED COMMUNISTS' DEFENSIVE POSTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. FAR LEFT DEMONSTRATES AGAINST COST OF LIVING: AN ESTIMATED
4,000 PERSONS MARCHED THROUGHT LISBON'S STREETS DURING THE
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PAGE 02 LISBON 00370 190823Z

EVENING OF JANUARY 16 (REF A). THE DEMONSTRATION WAS IN

PROTEST AGAINST THE RISING COST OF LIVING AND ALSO CALLED FOR THE RELEASE OF THE "ANTI-FASCISTS" IMPRISONED AFTER THE ABORTIVE NOVEMBER 25 LEFTIST COUP. ORGANIZED BY THE GROUP FOR PROMOTION OF ORGANIZATION OF POPULAR WILL (GDOVP), THE EVENT WAS NOTABLE FOR THE HIGH PROPORTION OF YOUTHFUL PARTICIPANTS. AN EMBASSY OBSERVER ESTIMATED THAT 90 PERCENT WERE UNDER 30 YEARS OF AGE AND MANY SEEMED TO BE STUDENTS RATHER THAN WORKERS. NATIONAL GUARD (GNR) WAS OUT IN STRENGTH EQUIPPED WITH RIOT BATONS, SHIELDS, VISORED HELMETS, AND TEAR GAS. GNR WAS EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL. THE DEMONSTRATION DISPERSED ENTIRELY WITHOUT INCIDENT AFTER HEARING A NUMBER OF SPEAKERS CONDEMN THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT'S POLITIES.

2. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS STRIKE LIMITED SUCCESS: A TWO-HOUR STRIKE CALLED JANUARY 16 BY THE CIVIL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION HAD FAIRLY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AMONG WORKERS AT THE LARGER FIRMS IN THE LISBON AND OPORTO AREAS. HOWEVER, IT WAS LARGELY IGNORED BY WORKERS EMPLOYED BY THE NUMEROUS SMALLER, LESS WELL ORGANIZED COMPANIES WHICH COMPRISE THE LARGEST PART OF THE SECTOR. IN AN INDUSTRY ALREADY NOTABLE FOR NEAR PARALYSIS AND WORK SLOWDOWNS, ONE OBSERVER COMMENTED THAT ON A DAMP, FOGGY DAY LIKE YESTERDAY, IT WAS HARD TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A STRIKING AND A NON-STRIKING WORKER. THE STRIKE WAS CALLED TO PROTEST THE GOVERNMENT'S "ANTI-WORKER POLICIES."

3. AZORES: COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CM) ON JAN 16 APPROVED CHANGES IN DECREE-LAW ON AUTONOMY FOR AZORES WHICH HAD BEEN SOUGHT BY REGIONAL JUNTA (REF B). CM APPROVED SAME CHANGES FOR MADEIRA. CM STATEMENT LEFT UNCLEAR WHETHER STATUTE OF AUTONOMY WILL BE PROMULGATED IMMEDIATELY OR LEFT FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

4. IARN TO BE REPLACED: ON JAN 16, CM ALSO DECIDED TO REPLACE INSTITUTE FOR ASSISTANCE TO NATIONAL RETURNEES (IARN). CM STATED THAT PRESENTATION OF MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS MADE CLEAR THE NECESSITY TO CREATE AN OPERATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHOSE ACTIVITIES ARE SEPARATED FROM ALL OTHER GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS. CM RECOGNIZED IARN'S EFFORTS IN EMERGENCY, BUT STATED THAT IARN LACKED COMPETENCE AND MEANS TO INTEGRATE
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PAGE 03 LISBON 00370 190823Z

RETURNEES INTO PORTUGUESE SOCIETY. CM DIRECTED THAT THE NEW ORGANIZATION SHOULD PROVIDE FOR RETURNEES' PARTICIPATION THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

5. CUNHAL ON SMALL FARMERS: COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) LEADER ALVARO CUNHAL SPOKE TO RALLY IN OPORTO STADIUM JAN 16. AMCONSUL ON SCENE ESTIMATED CROWD AT NEAR-CAPACITY 15,000. PCP'S OWN SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WERE VERY HEAVY. CUNHAL ATTACKED "FASCIST

BANDS CARRYING OUT TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN THE NORTH," AND
SAID PCP FAVORS FOLLOWING POLICIES TOWARD SMALL FARMER:

-- CONTINUATION OF RENTAL LAW WHEN SMALL FARMER DESIRES IT WITH
WRITTEN CONTRACT AND GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO FARM LAND;

-- TURNING OVER UNUSED LANDS OF LARGE PROPERTY OWNERS AND
FORESTRY SERVICE TO SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMERS;

-- IMMEDIATE END TO INHERITED PRIVILEGES ON LAND;

-- GUARANTEED PRICES; AND

-- IMPROVED MARKETING OF PRODUCT.

6. VOTING REGISTRATION: MINISTRY OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION
ANNOUNCED JAN 16 THAT COMMITTEE NAMED BY PRESIDENTS OF
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WILL UPDATE VOTING LISTS FEB 10-24.
POLITICAL PARTIES ARE AUTHORIZED TO DESIGNATE OBSERVERS TO
COMMITTEES. ENTIRE PROCESS OF REGISTRATION IS TO BE COMPLETED
BY MAR 30.

7. CUBA-ANGOLA FLIGHTS: WEEKLY EXPRESSO JAN 17 CARRIED
FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF RECENT CUBAN FLIGHTS TO ANGOLA JAN 16 LISBON
RADIO CARRIED SIMILAR REPORT. EXPRESSO SPECULATED ON WHETHER
FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD DECIDED TO "CLOSE ITS EYES" TO JAN 14
OR WHETHER THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE CALLED IN AGAIN.

8. COMMENT: POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE WATCHING WEEKEND
DEMONSTRATIONS AND RALLIES AS EVIDENCE OF EXTENT TO
WHICH PCP AND FAR LEFT ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO CONFRONT
GOVERNMENT. JAN 16 FAR LEFT DEMONSTRATION WAS QUIET AND
UNIMPRESSIVE. POLICE, ON OTHER HAND, WERE UNUSUALLY WELL
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PAGE 04 LISBON 00370 190823Z

PREPARED AND EQUIPPED. JAN 17 PCP DEMONSTRATION WILL PROBABLY
REFLECT COMMUNIST DESIRE TO SHOW STRENGTH WITHOUT, HOWEVER,
DIRECTLY CHALLENGING GOP.
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